(b) total number of villages which are still out of reach of this facility;

(c) whether the Government have formulated any phased time bound to provide the telephone connections of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited in the said villages; and

(u) if so, the total funds made available or the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) 1,24,215 villages in the country have been provided with telephone facility during the last three years (2001-2002 to 2003-2004). As on 30-06-2004, 5,21,998 villages have access to telephone facility.

(b) Out of the total of 6,07,491 revenue villages in the country, 85,493 villages are yet to be provided with telephone facility.

(c) USO Fund Administrator has initiated action, by way of floating a tender for Village Public Telephones (VPTs) in eligible uncovered revenue villages. It has also signed agreements for the replacement of 1,84,497 VPTs on Multi Access Radio Relay (MARR) technology.

BSNL has planned to provide 8,061 villages with telecom facilities during the current financial year. Additionally, it has also planned to provide telecom facility by Satellite media in 16,740 remote and isolated villages which cannot be covered by any terrestrial technology.

(d) For the year 2004-05, USO Fund Administrator has been given a budget provision of Rs. 200 crore, BSNL expects to spend Rs.300 crores.for VPTs on satellite media during the current financial year.

Telephone fault in Andhra Pradesh

2432. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) number or telepnones, the fault of which could not be repaired for more than seven days, in Andhra Pradesh and areas falling under Hyderabad District Telecom during the years 2001-02, 2002-03 and 2003-04, even in the midst of lodging complaints by the customers;

(b) whether Government would assure of taking preventive and remedial steps to reduce this seven days period and being a drastic reduction faulty functioning of telephones;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Sir, number of telephones, the fault of which could not be repaired for more than seven days in Andhra Pradesh and areas falling under Hyderabad Telecom District during the year 2001 -02, 2002-03 and 2003-04 are as under:

Year	Faults pending for more than 7 days			
	A.P. circle including Hyderabad Telecom District.		Hyderabad Telecorm i. District	
	Total No. of faults	% of faults	Total No. of faults	% of faults
2001-02	59171	1.88	8188	1.11
2002-03	27726	0.85	5197	0.71
2003-04	49934	1.55	4855	0.70

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The following preventive and remedial steps are taken to reduce this seven days period:—

1. Computerisation of fault repair services in more and more exchanges for better monitoring of faults.
2. Centralisation of booking of complaints for small and medium exchanges at Short Distance Charging Area level.
3. Monitoring of faults by senior officers.
4. Conversion of RAXs into AN RAX exchanges and SBM exchanges to RSU's for better monitoring and management of faults etc.
5. Creation of pole-less network to avoid faults which occur in dropwire.

6. Replacement of fault prone paper-core cable by Polythene insulated jelly filled cable.

7. Rehabilitation of outdoor network.

8. Introduction of Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) for areas which are served beyond 2.5 Kms. which will eliminate the underground/overhead cables, thus reducing the faults.

9. Life of telephone instruments have been reduced from 10 years to 5 years.

(d) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

Rental concession on landline telephones

2433. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the senior citizens granted rental concession on landline telephones in Delhi during the last one year;

(b) the number of cases still pending as on the 30th Juno, 2004;

(c) by when, they would be finalized; and

(d) whether Government are considering to extend such concession to other States also, if so, State-wise details thereof and by when, it would be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) 12691 senior citizens were granted rental concession in MTNL, Delhi, during the last one year.

(b) 14 cases are pending as on 30-06-2004 on account of incomplete documents by the subscribers.

(c) These will be cleared as and when the subscribers complete the documents.

(d) No, Sir. Telephone service providers are to comply with Tariff Orders, Quality of Service Regulations and other directives issued from time to time by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) in this regard.